



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: May 23, 2000

Release Number: 00-43

Contact: Nancy Singer (202) 205-6740

Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/

SBA'S 53 STATE SMALL BUSINESS WINNERS: FAST-PACED GROWTH TYPIFIES DIVERSE AND INNOVATIVE GROUP

WASHINGTON - The State Small Business Persons of the Year for 2000 are diverse, technologically savvy, and heavily involved in manufacturing and retail, according to a tally of questionnaires the winners submitted last week to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

As they assemble this week in Washington, D.C., to receive honors from the SBA and from their peers, the winners embody the entrepreneurial enterprise and spirit that is fueling the growing American economy.

They are coming to the nation's capital after a rigorous contest to compete for National Small Business Person of the Year. The winner will be announced at a formal ceremony on Wednesday, May 24. SBA's National Small Business Week celebration begins with events on Tuesday, May 23, at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center and the Renaissance Hotel in Washington.

The winners represent a broad cross section of Americans. Of the 53 businesses owned by the state winners, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam:

- 35% are owned by women.
- 30% are owned by minorities.
- 57% are family owned and operated.
- 13% are veterans.
- 46% are in either manufacturing or retail.

The business owners produce and sell a vast array of products and services including: pasta, building materials, fiber optics lighting, furniture, cross cultural videos, environmental consulting, commercial printing, a confectionery, clinical drug researching, balsam products, restaurants, information technology, sheet metal products, digital printing services, and Internet access.

-more-

And they are technologically savvy:

- 100% use personal computers.
- 92% use e-mail.
- 69% have laptops.
- 88% use fax machines.
- 55% use pagers.
- 96% use modems giving them access to the Internet.
- 92% use cellular phones.

The state winners and other National Small Business Week participants will display exhibits featuring their businesses' products and services at the Ronald Reagan Building beginning Tuesday, May 23 at 6:00 p.m. The exhibits will close Thursday afternoon, May 25.

While not a criterion for nomination, 67% of the winners received financial or management assistance from the SBA.

As a group, the companies' average sales for last year was \$7.6 million, and they employ an average of 150 people. And while they are still considered small businesses, they had a much smaller work force at start up -- three employees and average first year sales of \$457,000.

In total, the winners' sales for the most recent fiscal year amounted to more than \$330 million. They have a total employment of more than 7,000.

It's no surprise that the U.S. Small Business Administration chose for this year's National Small Business Week theme these words: "Small Business: A History of Success: A Millennium of Opportunity."

These entrepreneurs are the top tier of the nation's small business owners - a sector that has led the nation in the business expansions in the past five years and is credited for producing more than 90% of the net new jobs.

And, not surprisingly, they all say they would do it all over again!

###